



## **ABSTINENCE EDUCATION**

### ***Defining The Problem***

#### **Sex Outside of Marriage Equals Risky Business What Kids Don't Know Could Kill Them**

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 5 Americans (56 million) have an incurable sexually transmitted disease (STDs). 3 million new teenagers and 9 million adults are infected annually. In the 1960s, there were only two important STDs – syphilis and gonorrhea. Today, there are more than 20 significant STDs. There are nearly 1 million teen pregnancies each year in the U.S. Human papilloma virus (HPV) causes over 90 percent of cervical cancer cases. This cancer kills 7,000 women a year – more than AIDS. Condoms offer virtually NO PROTECTION against HPV.

Approximately 10% of all 15 to 19 year old females will become pregnant – Even though since 1970, we've spent \$3 Billion (\$6 Billion adjusted to current dollars) to promote contraceptives and safe sex.

In Hawaii, the State Board of Education's policy #2110 declares that students shall be instructed "that abstention from sexual intercourse is the surest and most responsible way to prevent unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and consequent emotional distress."

The policy's flaw is that it also mandates providing youth with "information on and skill development in the use of protective devices and methods for the purpose of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy." That means teaching our kids how to use condoms and birth control pills.

Hawaii Family Forum (HFF) believes the mixed message being sent is an enormous part of the problem. Telling youth "we prefer you remain abstinent but we'll show you how to have safe sex" is a failed approach that gives youth a FALSE sense of security. The National Coalition for Abstinence Education explains the impact of the mixed message through a parallel teen smoking example. "We wish you wouldn't smoke, but if you do, smoke filtered cigarettes and we will provide them to you without telling your parents." The smoking example sure seems silly. Unfortunately, that is what's being done with kids and sex.

#### **Solution is the Positive Message of Abstinence**

HFF believes we send clear positive messages and set high standards regarding other public health issues such as cigarettes and drugs, so why not for abstinence? Casual sex is no less risky. HFF believes **Hawaii's youth deserve more than mixed messages and low expectations!**

Hawaii's youth can remain abstinent. Clearly articulated expectations to that effect from parents, teachers and the community are among the most important factors in their success. HFF will communicate those expectations along with the practical help kids need to abstain.

Hawaii Family Forum provides speakers, informational material, pamphlets and other educational information to public and private schools, churches, youth groups, civic organizations, and any other organization or individual interested in reaching youth with the positive message of abstinence until marriage.

**Hawaii Family Forum**

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